

## Reflections on Lattois Society During the 4th Century BC

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My task in this essay is largely to play an interlocutory, speculative, and provocative role in the provisional interpretive project undertaken in this volume. One cannot seriously pretend to present a comprehensive social and cultural interpretation of life at Lattes during the 4th century BC in a brief chapter such as this, even if the data currently available permitted this. And we must admit that, at present, they do not. Hence, more modestly, these few pages are offered as an attempt both to engage from an anthropological perspective some of the interpretive issues raised by other authors in this volume and to offer a few selective reflections on other social themes. I do this in part by posing several questions about the culture, society, and daily lives of people living at Lattes of a kind that a cultural anthropologist would find particularly critical for arriving at an understanding of a living group of people. However, it must be admitted immediately that many of these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily given the evidence available, and many may never be answerable. Moreover, some of the questions are about issues that may appear, at first glance, to be rather self-evidently transparent.

To many archaeologists, accustomed as we are to allowing our questions to grow cautiously from the empirical data, this may seem like a rather futile, or even

perverse, exercise. I hope not. My intention here is to be provocative in a heuristically fertile way. I would contend that treating apparently transparent facts as opaque questions and posing even potentially unanswerable questions can be useful for several reasons. In the first place, these practices may force us to regard the data we have in new ways — to see new connections and patterns of association that were not previously visible. Data become evidence only if they are attached to appropriate questions. Secondly, such a strategy may stimulate research in new directions that will yield data of types that were not considered relevant or necessary before. The whole project at Lattes is a testament to the ways in which new questions have continually pushed the development of ingenious new research programs. Finally, asking such questions may serve to make explicit some of the implicit assumptions that have structured our interpretations up to the present and to help us recognize aspects of the lives of the Lattois that were undoubtedly important even if they ultimately escape the resolution of our analytical lens.

Hence, my intentions in this essay are more Socratic than scientific. Rather than attempting the more prudent strategy of proposing a cautious interpretation of what the current data suggest about Lattois society of the fourth century BC, I

will pose a series of questions that would seem of a priori importance for understanding the nature of social life at Lattes during that period. I will then attempt to briefly assess to what extent the existing data allow us to answer such questions and what other kinds of information might be needed in order to do so. As indicated above, my answers to most of these questions will remain open-ended. This essay is clearly not intended to be a definitive statement. Nor will the range of questions be exhaustive. Rather the essay is intended to be a working interlocutory tool.

### Identity

Let us begin with the fundamental, but elusive, issue of identity. In what sense are we able to detect among the Lattois the parameters of a sense of shared association, or «community», with others through ascription to social categories or groups? In particular, how do we situate the Lattois in terms of what is often called «ethnic» identity and how do we understand the process of cultural change in relation to that? This is an especially important issue in an evolving colonial situation, and particularly at a port site such as Lattes. After all, Lattes would seem to be precisely the kind of site that Denig (1980), in his discussion of modern colonialism, referred to meta-

phorically as «the beach»: that is, the zone of direct encounter between indigenous peoples and colonial agents, where mutually misunderstood cultural differences are worked through in political and economic practice and creolized languages. Here is the space, par excellence, to observe Sahlins' (1985) complex «structures of the conjuncture» that generate historical transformations.

Beginning at the broadest level, Michel Py (cf. «La cité de *Lattara*...» this volume) has asserted that «Lattara was and remained during the entire Iron Age an indigenous town in the ethnic and cultural sense of the term». I believe that the evidence overwhelmingly supports this interpretation, as long as we understand the term «indigenous» as a broad ethnic analytical concept rather than an indigenous emic category. What can be clearly discerned in the material record, and what I believe Py was indicating, is that the Lattois were in no sense a «Hellenized» population: that is, a people attempting to emulate Greek culture or with a re-oriented sense of self-identification with Greeks. This is evident in, among other things, the highly selective consumption of alien Greek material culture and cultural practices. After over two centuries of interaction the range of items consumed was still very narrow and largely limited to the two classes of material one finds at sites of the region during the initial stages of contact: wine and ceramics (although with a somewhat expanded range of forms for the latter). What is more, as Py's analysis (Py, «La cité de *Lattara*...») shows, despite the development of a significant quantitative disparity between Lattes and settlements of the interior in terms of the consumption of Greek imports during the 4th century BC, the basic nature of those imports remained strikingly similar. In other words, the Lattois were simply consuming greater quantities and different proportions of the same general kinds of imported goods (wine and ceramics) as their neighbours in Eastern Languedoc, not a significantly broader range of goods. There were, to be sure, some subtle, but significant, differences in the overall range of forms of

ceramics consumed (Py, «La cité de *Lattara*...»). However, from a broader perspective on the complete range of domains of material culture, the similarities are more striking than the differences.

There was, for example, still no adoption in either context of writing or coinage, two very important Greek practices that were certainly known to the Lattois. For example, there are a few scattered examples of graffiti on ceramics (in Etruscan and Greek) at the site dating to before the 3rd century BC (Bats 1988, Py, «Le faciès de la céramique lattoise...» this volume), yet the practice of Gallo-Greek graffiti did not become even moderately common until the 2nd century BC (Bats 1988). There is also a minuscule quantity of finds of Massaliote silver coins dating to the 4th century BC, but coinage did not come into anything like common use until after the Roman conquest of Narbonensis (Py 1992 : 336). In other words, the evidence indicates several centuries of Lattois indifference to some quite important aspects of Greek culture. Similarly, the earliest evidence of any interest in olive oil at the site does not appear until the 3rd century BC (Garcia 1992), and even then it is uncertain whether this indicates local consumption or production for export to Massalia. Moreover, as far as one can tell from the existing evidence, there was no attempt to incorporate aspects of Greek dress, weaponry, or tools. The possibility of the importation of cloth is, of course, difficult to evaluate; but throughout Eastern Languedoc, imported Greek or Italian metal objects are extraordinarily rare (Feugère 1992, Py 1990 : 527-528). The significantly greater quantity of finds of La Tène type metal objects and glass beads imported from societies further north (Py 1990 : 518) demonstrates that this is not simply a feature of preservation or recovery. Similarly, there was no obvious attempt to transform the built environment toward Greek models. [1] More will be said about this pattern of selective borrowing later. For the moment, let us entertain the proposition that, during the 4th century BC, Greeks did not constitute a model for emulative desire by the Lattois, nor a

focus of identity orientation; rather, they were simply one periodically available source of a limited and quite specific range of desirable imported goods.

Two crucial questions immediately arise from this proposition: «why, then, were these goods desired by the Lattois» and «how important was this source of alien goods in their daily lives»? These questions will be discussed in more detail later, but a proper response requires us first to return to the issue I briefly broached above concerning the status of «indigenous identity» as an analytical concept.

Dividing the population of Mediterranean France into Greeks and natives is a useful shorthand for certain kinds of discussion. Moreover, it may even approach an accurate reflection of a rather Manichean «Greek versus barbarian» view of identity held by the Massaliotes. However, one must be careful not to reify this binary distinction, because it may not have been a meaningful dichotomy at all among what we classify as the indigenous peoples of the region. It must be remembered that by the beginning of the 4th century BC, Greeks had been living at Massalia for 200 years — at least a generation or two longer than people had been living at Lattara. They were an established feature of the regional cultural landscape. Moreover, Mediterranean France was clearly a region of multiple languages (Iberian, Ligurian, various Celtic dialects) and, most probably, ethnic affiliations. Hence, for the Lattois of the 4th century BC, it is quite conceivable that the Massaliotes represented nothing more than another «indigenous» neighbouring group of the region, speaking another alien language (but no more alien than others they were used to encountering), who they experienced only in the form of merchant-sailors during the periodic arrival of ships at their port (and, perhaps, a small diasporic group of such traders whose residence was tolerated at the site).

We tend instinctively to identify Massaliotes synecdochically with the larger Greek world, including especially the legacy of classical Athens. We transform the purchase of an Attic pot or an

exchange with a Massaliote trader into an encounter with «Greek culture». However, there is no reason to assume that the Lattois had any such notion ; and, in fact, it is highly doubtful that the Lattois had any conception of «Greece» with which to associate Massaliote traders or Attic pots. My own ethnographic experience in African agrarian societies showed that people often have extremely vague, and sometimes erroneous, ideas about the origin of imported objects, even when the original source is only about 50 km away. Items are often said to come, for example, «from the west» or from the neighbouring group of people (even when those neighbours actually got the objects from yet another group).

What is more, our own understanding of «the Greeks» is a product of modern synthetic scholarship and a rampant cultural infatuation that grew out of an invented mythology of European identity which developed after the Renaissance (Dieter 1995a, Marchand 1996, Morris 1994). Scholars formed in this tradition have often tended to privilege contact with Greeks, or with Greek objects, as having some remarkably potent effect upon indigenous peoples of a kind that was qualitatively different from contact and exchange with other indigenous societies. Indeed, contact with Greeks has often been imbued with an almost magical ability to induce sentiments of admiration and longing for the Greek way of life. However, as Sahlins (1993) has noted in regard to similar erroneous assumptions about the inherent attractiveness and transformative properties of European goods in modern colonial contexts, for many colonized peoples, despite European fantasies about the significance of their arrival on the scene, it is not the moment of contact with Europeans that is most marked in historical consciousness, but rather the moment of *domination*. The period before domination was still a time under their own cultural control, when alien objects and persons could be encompassed within their own projects and used to further their own cultural schemes. As he further stated, «The first commercial impulse of the people is not

to become just like us but more like themselves»; and foreign goods were turned to the service of domestic ideas, to the objectification of their own relations and notions of the good life (Sahlins 1993 : 16-17).

Hence, in considering the influence of contact with Massalotes on Lattois identity, it is important to remember that the Massalotes were never a dominant power in Eastern Languedoc : they were at most a tolerated trading presence on the margins of a set of autonomous local societies with robust cultural identities and no reason for any sense of inferiority. That moment of domination to which Sahlins refers did not occur for the Lattois until after the Roman conquest several centuries later. In the interim, the history of Lattois interaction with Massalotes is one of mutual selective consumption of alien goods across cultural frontiers.

That consumption had significant social and cultural effects, to be sure. But the Lattois lived long before Winckelman, and it is a grotesque anachronism to impose our own Hellenophilic views upon people of the 4th century BC. Rather, we must attempt to ignore the intellectual heritage of the Renaissance and Romantic Hellenism and try to imagine what the Lattois actually perceived when a small ship of Massaliote traders (and what is more, quite probably a rather motley crew of «metics») docked outside the ramparts with a cargo of wine and ceramics. What they surely did not experience is visions of the Parthenon, Praxiteles, and Plato. These things were almost certainly unknown to them. It is not even clear that many (or any) Lattois would have had a very clear image of Massalia as a specific place, that they should have had any particular curiosity about it or fascination with it, or that they would have been particularly impressed had they seen it (and even less so in the case of the closer, more recent, and vastly smaller colonial outpost of Agde). Hence we cannot assume that our own heightened valuation of Attic and Massaliote ceramics as indexical signs of «Greek culture» had any meaning for the Lattois or played any role in Lattois demand for

these goods. Nor can we assume that their consumption at Lattes is any indication of a Lattois shift of identity toward Greek models. I will return to this question of demand and consumption later. But for the moment, I would like to continue pushing this consideration of the nature of Lattois identity in other directions.

If the provisional estimates of the size of Lattes during the 4th century BC at 10 hectares of densely occupied space are proven correct by further excavation, then already by that time Lattes was an unusually large settlement within its regional context (see Garcia, «La gestion de l'espace urbain...» et Py, «La cité de *Lattara* dans le contexte...» in this volume). Given its size and the duration of the settlement, it is highly probable that it formed a significant focus of identity for its inhabitants. That is, the concept of «person of *Lattara*» (assuming this name extends back to the 4th century BC) was very likely an extremely important one for its residents over the generations ; perhaps *the* most important one. Lattes (not Massalia) was the center of their world. As Sahlins reminds us, «Every society known to history is a global society, every culture a cosmological order» (1993 : 16). That is, each includes the universe within its own cultural scheme and interprets and accommodates the appearance of alien peoples and objects within its own conception of center and periphery. In other words, while for Massalotes the Lattois may have been simply a useful segment of a relatively undifferentiated «barbarian» world, reciprocally, for the Lattois the Massalotes may have been simply one useful part of the peripheral, relatively undifferentiated «non-Lattois» world.

Given that Lattes was almost certainly a primary focus of communal identity for its inhabitants, what can we say about other levels of identity ? For example, did the Lattois feel themselves to be part of some larger regional political or moral «community»; and can we identify more specific foci of identity (e.g. clans, lineages, neighbourhoods) below the level of the town as a whole ? Some of these latter kinds of identity (e.g. clans)

could cross-cut the boundaries of Lattes itself and link some Lattois groups to groups in other communities in the region. Moreover, a cross-cultural ethnographic perspective indicates that these latter kinds of identity, in particular, can be extremely important in small-scale societies for determining such things as access to land and other economic resources, marriage opportunities, and the structuring of political relations. Unfortunately, these are not easy questions to answer on the basis of archaeological evidence.

Py («La cité de *Lattara*...») has estimated that Lattes of the 4th century had a population of approximately 4,000 to 4,500. Hence a first step in pursuing the questions raised above is to ask whether this might have constituted a self-contained endogamous breeding population. This is biologically possible, but is it plausible? Marriage is not simply a matter of biology, but rather a fact of culture and politics. Alternatively, it is also possible that the Lattois constituted an entirely exogamous community that drew spouses exclusively from other villages of the surrounding region. How would we know? And what are the implications for social life?

If the Lattois as a whole were endogamous, then we would expect the settlement to contain at least two (and perhaps many) well differentiated exogamous groups (clans, lineages, moieties, etc.) that would provide each other with spouses. Depending upon their nature, these groups might be residentially segregated to some extent, for example, in îlots or neighbourhoods and perhaps marked by differences in cultural practices, some of which might involve material culture (e.g. subtle differences in cuisine, decoration patterns of hearths, clothing, totemic signs). The interestingly variable pattern of the placement of central hearths in the front room versus the back room of the house might be one such revealing diacritical feature. [2] In Africa it is frequently the case that iron smiths are confined to a single lineage or clan, and the location of smithing furnaces (Lebeaupin 1998) might be a possible clue to such groups at

Lattes (although this is far from certain). Finally, the nearly identical nature of the side by side houses in Zone 27 reported by Lebeaupin («Évolution d'un groupe d'habitations...» in this volume) is highly suggestive of some very close relationship (familial or lineage perhaps). The problem is that it is impossible to say *a priori* which practices might have been made operationally relevant as diacritica by the Lattois, or to assume that the same practices would be relevant throughout the site; hence the identification of such categorical distinctions must rely upon careful contextual arguments. If, on the other hand, the Lattois as a whole formed an exogamous group, then they would presumably all share a common genealogical charter of identity that would be different from the communities with which spouses were exchanged. Such internal cultural differences of the type mentioned above might perhaps be less marked within the settlement, or at least show less patterned regularity.

However, based upon analogy with ethnographic cases, perhaps the most likely situation for a relatively large, expanding port town such as Lattes is some combination of these marriage recruitment patterns. That is, a population of sufficient genealogical diversity to allow marriage exchanges between groups within the settlement, but also a common orientation toward exchanges with other groups in the region. More will be said about this later under the discussion of social organization, but for the moment let us simply state that some degree of village exogamy would produce affinal relationships linking family groups in Lattes to those of other settlements. Such affinal alliances usually have very important economic and political implications. For example, marriages are often made specifically to create political bonds, affines often are a source of emergency aid in times of famine or other hardship, and affinal networks sometimes serve as the basis for exchange relationships and trade networks. I would suggest that these are a very likely feature structuring relations between Lattois families and those of other settle-

ments in Eastern Languedoc, and perhaps beyond.

Aside from these complex networks of affinal links, to what extent, and in what ways, can we assume that the Lattois as a whole felt themselves affectively attached to other settlements of the region by bonds of language, religion, politics, genealogy, or other aspects of culture? To a certain extent, this question depends upon how «ethnically» diverse we imagine the town to have been. For example, we know that Lattes was unusual within its regional context in terms of size, its early rampart, and certain quantitative trends in the consumption of exotic goods. But was it unusual in other ways? Was it, for example, a cosmopolitan, polylinguistic community composed of groups of people drawn to the site from different parts of the coast and the hinterland by trading opportunities — a settlement fundamentally different in character from others in Eastern Languedoc? Or was it, in essence, simply a very large village, similar to others of the region but for a few peculiarities stemming from its proximity to coastal trade and its growing size? This question, in turn, depends upon the historical issue of whether we see Lattes as predominantly a port town in origin or as essentially an agricultural and fishing village that gradually became a privileged site of exchange with coastal trading ships.

My own view is that the existing evidence points strongly toward the latter scenario as more likely, but both must be considered seriously as possibilities. The ultimate resolution of this question relies to a large extent upon information about the early history of the site which still lies buried under the levels of the 4th century BC. However, the nature of the imports consumed at the site suggests not a cosmopolitan market center but rather a fairly typical native settlement of the region with privileged access to exotic goods, but rather similar tastes. Moreover, the information from domestic units across the site during the 4th century BC and later periods does not point in any obvious way toward the kind of markedly patterned heterogeneity in the organiza-

tion of space and the use of material culture that one might expect from a poly-ethnic community.

On the contrary, there is both a limited range of consistent patterning in terms of domestic structures across the site (see Lebeaupin, «Évolution d'un groupe d'habitations...», Py 1996, Roux, «Histoire et évolution de l'habitat...» this volume) as well as certain aspects of material culture and the use of domestic space that point to close cultural connections between Lattes and other villages of Eastern Languedoc. Indigenous ceramics (of the CNT-LOR group) are one obvious feature that links Lattes to other sites (Py 1990, Py, «Le faciès de la céramique lattoise...» this volume), although it is important to point out that ceramic style alone can be deceptive. These are mobile objects that were produced for exchange. Moreover, ethnographic studies have shown that ceramics often have little or no significance as markers of identity for consumers, and the distribution of even very small ceramic style zones can cut directly across important ethnic divisions and other social boundaries (e.g. see Dietler and Herbich 1994).

More significant, perhaps, are the permutations of such non-mobile features as settlement organization and the tradition of decorated hearths that characterized Eastern Languedoc during the 4th century BC. As Roux and Raux (1996 : 421-423) have demonstrated, those at Lattes are similar in general conception, dimensions, technique of construction and decoration, and placement in the room to those at other sites of the region, while exhibiting some locally distinctive Lattois patterns of decorative elaboration. Features such as these do not necessarily indicate a shared *consciousness* of common identity (e.g. a shared sense of «tribal» or «ethnic» identity within the region). But they do indicate certain shared commonalities of cultural conceptions that seem to be markedly bounded at the Hérault valley to the west (Garcia 1993, Py 1993). The extent to which these or other non-material cultural similarities (e.g. language ?) would have been mobilized as indexes of communal identity within the region (or, inversely,

to which subtle distinctions in similar practices would have been invoked as diacritical markers of locally distinct identities), would most probably have been contextually determined. That is, such distinctions were undoubtedly very fluid and dependant upon the context of interaction in which identity became a relevant issue. The reification of such identities as static, territorially bounded entities normally stems from the bureaucratic practices of states, such as the imposition of colonial systems of classification and control ; and in the 4th century BC these were not yet a relevant feature of the cultural landscape of Eastern Languedoc.

Language was tentatively suggested above as one other possible connection between the Lattois and other inhabitants of Eastern Languedoc. But how much do we know about what language(s) the Lattois spoke ? The plausible interpretation of the toponym «Lattara» offered by Barruol (1988) as well as the proprietary name evidence from graffiti on ceramics (Bats 1988) both suggest a Celtic linguistic presence at the site, at least in later centuries. No evidence for other languages has yet been recovered at Lattes (excluding the few Etruscan and Greek graffiti), although this does not, of course, exclude the possibility of their presence. At least some form of pidgin or creolized dialect was probably used for communication between Massaliote traders and the Lattois. This may even have been some form of more widespread trade language (similar to Kiswahili and Lingala in Africa), a role very likely served by Iberian further to the west. Unfortunately, no evidence currently exists at Lattes to support this conjecture.

Relying upon the meager evidence we do have, can we posit a common link between Celtic speakers at Lattes and other sites of Eastern Languedoc ? The answer is, I believe, a qualified yes. Greek textual evidence concerning the distribution of languages in Mediterranean France is rather ambiguous and imprecise at best (e.g. the eastern boundary of Iberian is placed by some sources at the Hérault and by others at the Rhône). In general, one must be wary of such

information because the quality of Greek linguistic knowledge of «barbarian» societies is highly suspect (as with nineteenth century European traders in Africa) ; and, among other problems, it is often unclear whether the categorical designations offered are based primarily upon linguistic, geographical, or cultural criteria. However, toponymic evidence and the distribution of Gallo-Greek inscriptions from the late 3rd century BC on would seem to support the idea of Celtic speakers in Eastern Languedoc at least within a century after the 4th century BC, and quite probably much earlier (Py 1993). The region was not necessarily linguistically uniform (despite the similarity in material culture among sites), but Celtic speaking groups were very probably predominant.

However, the linguistic links between Lattes and other settlements in Eastern Languedoc do not necessarily translate into a sense of common «Celtic» identity ; and they certainly do not indicate any identification with Celtic speakers of the La Tène north. For one thing, the various languages and dialects that philologists now group within the family rubric of «Celtic» undoubtedly contained many variants that were as mutually unintelligible as are Irish and Welsh today. Moreover, there is no reason why ancient Celtic speakers should have had a common consciousness of «Celtic» identity any more than do the various speakers of Bantu languages of Africa. These «families» are ex post facto linguistic classificatory constructs created by philologists, not communities of sentiment. The idea of a pan-Celtic culture or ethnic unity is a fiction of 19th century romantic nationalism that has no basis in Iron Age social realities. Py's (1993) contention that the «Gaulois du Midi» were dramatically different in culture and identity than the «Gaulois du Nord» is clearly correct. And even within the Gaulois du Midi there was no unity, but rather many locally distinct «ethnic» groups.

If we adhere to a definition of ethnicity similar to that employed by Barth (1969) — that is the most general level of categorical self-ascription that is also ascribed by others — then it is highly

unlikely that ethnic groups in Iron Age Mediterranean France ever exceeded the size of those named entities (e.g. Volcae, Cavares, Saluvii) mentioned by various Greek and Roman authors. And most were probably considerably smaller, especially during the 4th century BC. Eastern Languedoc might easily have contained several such groups. Whether the Lattois were a part of one such group, or might even have constituted an independent ethnic group in and of themselves, is difficult to determine. As Barth noted, an ethnic group is not a cultural fact but a form of *social* organization ; and, although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of objective differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant (Barth 1969).

However, as Nash (1993) pointed out, the most common boundary markers in the ethnographic record that serve as indexes of ethnicity are kinship, commensality, and common religion (constituting a single recursive metaphor of 'blood, substance, and cult'). The more immediately visible secondary cultural features (e.g. dress, language, architecture, ritual practices, economic practices) that are often taken to point synecdochically to these primary indexes of inclusion and exclusion are less predictable in the indexical weight that is ascribed to them in different contexts. However, one of the corollaries of this perspective is that ethnic groups are very often at least preferentially (though by no means exclusively) endogamous. Hence, once it is possible to answer the earlier question posed about Lattois patterns of marriage recruitment, then the question of ethnic identity may also be closer to resolution. At present, particularly without adequate burial data, this is extremely difficult. However, the location and excavation of more funerary sites coupled with promising new techniques of DNA analysis might well help to sort out regional networks of marriage recruitment.

### Social Structure

What can be discerned of some even more basic, and elusive, social facts ? What, for example, was the nature of social relationships that structured households and neighbourhoods ? Were the Lattois polygamous or monogamous ? Was post-marital residence virilocal or uxorilocal ? [3] Was there a cognatic or a unilineal kinship system (e.g. patrilineal, matrilineal) or some other way of structuring relationships within neighbourhoods ? These are all questions with very important implications for the daily lives of the Lattois and for our understanding of the site, although, as will be seen, many cannot (yet ?) be answered.

For example, Py's estimate of 4,000 to 4,500 inhabitants of 4th century BC Lattes is based upon an average of 5 people per house. This is a reasonable and useful estimate. However, it should be remembered that at any given moment in time, the settlement would have contained households occupied by groups at all stages of the familial life cycle, from aged single widows to newly married couples without children, to families with their full run of children. It is also quite probable that some houses would have been temporarily vacant : following deaths, for example. The destruction levels and reconstruction episodes identified in Zone 1 (Roux, 'Histoire et évolution de l'habitat...'), for example, point to processes that were likely to have been occurring in cycles all over the site. Hence the idea of an average figure needs to be nuanced by the vision of the settlement as a dynamic construct composed of constantly shifting households at different cycle phases. The constitution of households would also have had an important bearing on such issues. For example, it would make an important difference if households at Lattes were composed of nuclear families, stem-families, or extended families. [4]

The question of monogamy or polygamy is also an important issue, because one might envisage a given block of houses at Lattes as occupied either, for example, by sets of independent monogamous nuclear families or by the wives

and children of a single polygynous husband (each wife with her own house). The latter pattern would make the blocks more like family compounds within the larger settlement, with the street serving as a communal activity area of the compound. The existence of courtyards open to the street with possibly communal ovens in Zone 1 (Roux Chapter xx) might well indicate some such close cooperative relationship between residents of a street. Whether this relationship might have been between co-wives, families of a single lineage, or perhaps simply unrelated neighbours is difficult to say. However, the fact that îlot 1D was constructed as a multi-unit structure in a single event (Roux, 'Histoire et évolution de l'habitat...') and the fact of the identical spatial organization of the two adjacent houses in Zone 27 (phase 2F : Lebeaupin, 'Évolution d'un groupe d'habitations...') strongly suggest something more like familial relations (a point also raised by Michel Py in a recent personal communication). Either polygynous families or monogamous extended families are plausible interpretations. A diachronic study of such patterns which traces evolving similarities within îlots back several generations would perhaps reveal further clues supporting the idea of familial co-residence and allow some distinction between the two options noted above.

Unfortunately, the issue of kinship and marriage patterns is a difficult, if not impossible, question to answer more precisely from the archaeological evidence alone ; and the textual evidence is equally ambiguous. Given the greater prevalence of polygamy over monogamy in a worldwide historical and ethnographic sample, one might be tempted to infer polygamy in this case ; but that is a highly unreliable basis for such a conjecture. On the contrary, one might object that polygamy would have struck the monogamous Greeks and Romans as a sufficiently curious practice to have commented upon it had they witnessed it. However, as Momigliano (1975 : 50-64) has pointed out, the Massaliotes themselves have left us almost no information about their neighbours and the peoples with whom

they traded. Other Greek texts concerning «Celts» from the fourth century BC are equally uninformative in terms of cultural practices (aside from warfare and heavy drinking), and those more fully elaborated accounts that exist from later centuries (e.g. Posidonios, Polybius, Strabo) often obscure local detail under broad generalizations in which the precise location of observations is not specified. And it is important to emphasize that there is no reason to expect uniformity among such cultural practices among all Celtic-speaking peoples, or even among Celtic-speaking societies within a small region : a quick glance at the great diversity of such practices among Bantu speakers in Africa should serve to dispel that notion.

What is more, that which can be discerned from textual sources indicates that both polygamy and monogamy very probably existed among Celtic-speaking peoples. The Irish legal texts, for example, clearly indicate the existence of polygyny in that region, with different statuses accorded to different classes of wives (Kelly 1989). Moreover, various classical references to promiscuous practices among «Celts» (e.g. Caesar BG 5.14 ; Cassius Dio 62.6 ; Strabo IV.5.4) may simply be a culturally inflected misperception of polygyny. Caesar made a generalization at one point to the effect that the Gauls and Iberians were monogamous, but then, in describing certain customs of the Gauls associated with the death of a husband, he referred in the plural to the *wives* of a man in a way that implies multiple wives as a norm (B.G. VI.19). Caesar (B.G. V.14) also described in Britain a practice of «sharing wives» that Ehrenberg (1989) interprets as polyandry. However, given the extreme rarity of this practice, it is perhaps at least as likely that Caesar's description of the sharing of a wife between brothers actually refers to the practice the levirate (the inheritance of a widow by a brother of the husband). It is important to remember also that, in ethnographic cases, such practices often vary within a society according to class or status. It appears this was the case among certain Germanic tribes, about whom Tacitus claimed that they were «almost

unique among barbarians in being content with one wife apiece», except for certain members of the elite, who were polygynous for reasons of political alliances (Germania 18).

Hence, I would suggest that the question of monogamy versus polygamy at Lattes is far from resolved. Both practices probably existed among Celtic-speakers, and it is not possible to make broad generalizations on the basis of linguistic classification. The silence of the Greeks about such things at Lattes may not be significant, as we know little at all about the site from texts except for an anecdote about dolphins in the lagoon (see Barruol 1988). A more promising line of research might be to search Roman period texts and dedicatory inscriptions for possible traces of polygamous structures, although such features can change over the centuries and one must also be aware of the pressures for adaptation to Roman cultural expectations under imperial rule, particularly by the assimilating elite who would be the most likely to make such literate dedications. I am reminded of the example of a polygynous society of East Africa that I know in which, in the face of condemnation of polygyny by Christian missionaries, the different wives of a man will each attend a different church and thus give a misleading impression of monogamy to the various priests and ministers.

The question of descent structures and post-marital residence patterns is perhaps even more vexing and intractable. To give a sense of why these issues might be extremely important for understanding Lattes, I cite an example of a New Guinea people called the Siane. As Salisbury's (1962 : 116-118) study there showed, given a patrilineal system with virilocal post-marital residence, the incorporation of exotic objects into the sphere of marriage exchanges can actually affect the regional distribution of population. As the supply of these objects was localized in one place (the government post and mission station), the people closest to the station became advantaged in regional exchange networks because of their exploitation of certain valuables (steel

axes and shells) which were provided at the station in exchange for labor. This resulted in a wave-like pattern of inflation in exchange rates radiating out from the source. Moreover, because the valuables were employed in bridewealth exchanges, it also resulted in an inverse wave of «migration» of women towards the source. That is, people near the source could acquire more wives with their new wealth, and these were increasingly drawn from more distant groups with far fewer valuables than were necessary within the source area. These people who were more distant from the source lost women but acquired more valuables. They, in turn used their new wealth to acquire more wives from those groups even farther away from the source. The result was an imbalanced flow of women and a gradual increase in population around the source. If the post-marital residence pattern had been matrilineal, this would not have happened. I am not suggesting that the Siane pattern explains what was responsible for the increasing size of Lattes relative to settlements of the interior (although it is certainly a possible factor). Rather, I use this example to emphasize the point that these social structural features are more than simply interesting epiphenomenal facts that would add color to our reconstructions of life at Lattes ; they have important and far-reaching historical consequences.

The problem is that they are extremely difficult to discern in the archaeological record. For example, several innovative attempts to use the study of ceramic micro-styles to identify matrilineal residence patterns among Native American groups (Deetz 1965, Longacre 1970) appeared promising when they were published. However, these have subsequently been shown to have had some serious flaws, not least of which is that ethnoarchaeological studies have shown that similar micro-style patterns can be produced by both matrilineal and patrilineal residence systems, depending upon the pattern of craft learning networks (Herbich 1987). In the case of Lattes, perhaps the best hope for clues to descent systems and residence patterns lies in a

study of the evidence of names and dedicatory inscriptions from the Roman period. DNA analysis of funerary data may also prove to be a promising method of identifying post-marital residence patterns, once more excavation of funerary contexts has been undertaken. In the meantime, one can say simply that among unilineal descent systems, patrilineal systems are far more common than matrilineal (and, correspondingly, virilocal residence is more common than uxorilocal). However, this is a weak basis for making statements about Lattes, for which it is not even certain that unilineal descent was operative. Among Celtic speaking peoples generally, it appears that both patrilineal and matrilineal systems may have existed in different societies. The ancient Irish laws, for example, clearly show patrilineal descent principles. Other evidence seems to point, albeit ambiguously, to possible matrilineal systems at some places on the continent. For example, Livy noted that Ambigatus of the Bituriges sent two of his sister's sons to lead emigrations; and, while certainly not definitive proof, this kind of authority of mother's brother over sister's son is quite characteristic of matrilineal systems. And Pauli (1972) has used funerary data at the Hallstatt period Mülacker cemetery in Germany to posit a matrilineal/matrilocal pattern there. For the moment, this must remain an open question for the Lattois. One can at least add, however, that polygyny is far less likely if the Lattois had a matrilineal/matrilocal system — this combination generally works only with a special form called «sororal polygyny» (where a man is married to several sisters).

### Settlement Size and Social Life

What implications can be derived from the growth of Lattes and its unusual size in relation to other settlements of the region? The most immediate implication is that this would have occasioned certain problems that would have to have been dealt with. One of these is almost certainly an increase in infectious diseases and parasites. This would be due not only to increasing problems of sanitation (i.e. the

difficulty of disposal of human and animal waste), but to the increased density of vectors of contagion (i.e. contact with other people). What is more, because of both its proximity to mosquito-breeding marshes and its population density, Lattes would almost certainly have been far more dangerous for malaria than sites of the interior. Although this problem was eradicated in the 19th and 20th centuries, malaria was previously a serious problem for many coastal cities of the western Mediterranean with nearby marshes (not least Marseille and Rome). LeRoy Ladurie (1974 : 17) has specifically noted the devastating impact of malaria on coastal Languedoc during the fifteenth century, when most of the ports (including Lattes) almost ceased to function in the wake of rampant malaria caused by an increase in stagnant water. Among the consequences of these features would have been an increased infant mortality rate (due to anaemia, and consequent reduced resistance to other diseases, as well as the dangers of malarial fevers) and a reduced life expectancy. Hence, Lattes was almost certainly a less healthy place to live than settlements such as Gailhan or Mauressip, and it must have offered some strong positive incentives in order to have maintained a large population, and indeed continued to grow. Coincidentally, this health profile has some bearing on our consideration of the ritual interments of infants found in domestic structures at the site (see Roux, «Histoire et évolution de l'habitat...»), as at other sites of the region (Py 1990 : 802). These burials are certainly not numerous enough to constitute a standard funerary practice for infants; hence they are ritual practices of another kind. It is uncertain whether these were natural deaths or ritual infanticides, but it is clear that infanticide would have been a far more risky practice for a family at Lattes than at sites of the interior because of the other factors which elevated infant mortality risks.

Another obvious problem that would have arisen at Lattes is the need for resolving conflicts. These are a ubiquitous feature of human groups, and increasing population inevitably increases the num-

ber of disputes (e.g. over land rights, theft, marital infidelity, witchcraft accusations, personal injuries, etc.). One way for such conflicts to be settled without violence is for aggrieved groups to simply leave the settlement, and this is the reason that many settlements remain small. However, the very existence of Lattes as a large town over many centuries indicates the existence of some other institutionalized means of resolving conflicts within the site. Contrary to the ideas of many archaeologists, this does not necessarily imply the existence of a form of centralized, hierarchical political structure. Such disputes can be adjudicated by, for example, councils of lineage or neighbourhood elders, religious leaders, or respected men of influence who do not have formal political roles. What it does imply is some space for at least small public meetings where disputes are aired, arbitration takes place, and settlements are negotiated. This could have taken place, for example, in public squares (of which there is little evidence at Lattes), at crossroads, outside the gates of the town, at a marketplace, or simply in the street in front of the home of an influential man.

Can we say something more concrete about political organization and social hierarchies at Lattes and how this fit with regional forms of political organization? This is difficult to do on the basis of settlement evidence alone, as funerary ritual, which is a dramatically compressed form of politico-symbolic representation, is usually a necessary complementary line of evidence. Although it is notoriously complicated to interpret, I believe we will know a good deal more about the structure of social relations and political power at Lattes once a number of funerary sites have been excavated.

In the meantime, what I will venture to say at present is that I would agree strongly with Py's statement («La cité de Lattara...») that the chiefdom and/or early state structures of the Hallstatt and La Tène north are not relevant to Mediterranean France, except by their contrasting character. Indeed, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Dietler 1995b), funerary patterns during the Early Iron Age were



exactly the inverse in the lower Rhône basin and the western Hallstatt zone. The latter region was marked by the development of a consistent associated set of elite status markers (four-wheeled wagons, weapons, drinking and feasting gear) in huge and elaborate Hallstatt tumulus burials showing several correlated diachronic trends. From the early to the late Hallstatt period, such burials become at the same time : 1) increasingly exclusive (i.e. found in ever smaller numbers), 2) increasingly widespread (i.e. found over a much wider region), and 3) increasingly more richly endowed (see Pare 1991, 1992). In other words, the specific iconography for representing status distinctions came to be shared for a certain set of wealthy burials in a very consistent, and increasingly exclusive, way across many different micro-regions. The striking lack of a similar inter-regional homogeneity in the less elaborate Hallstatt burials (cf. Reim 1988, Wamser 1975, Zürn 1987) serves to emphasize all the more the extraordinary consistency of the wealthier set of tombs and argues for the formation of a regional elite presiding over an institutionalized system of social stratification. Moreover, by this late period Mediterranean imports began to appear in the most elaborate of these graves and on the fortified hillforts associated with them (and they were fairly consistently limited to and concentrated in these contexts).

In the lower Rhône basin, both the funerary patterns and their historical trends were quite different. For the late seventh and first half of the sixth century BC, there is an extremely heterogeneous association of funerary features (mode of corpse treatment, grave goods, tomb type, etc.) revealing an absence of clear hierarchical clustering even within small cemeteries. After the mid sixth century, the degree of conspicuous funerary elaboration declined to the point that relatively few burials have left visible traces. For both periods of the Early Iron Age, not only is there a lack of significant recognizable patterned differentiation within cemeteries or among cemeteries within micro-regions, but there is equally no regionally consistent configuration of fea-

tures which might be taken as indicative of a widely shared iconography of status differentiation. Mediterranean imports, for example, are found in large numbers as domestic debris on many settlements. And, by their lack of consistent association with a particular grave form, burial rite, or set of funerary furniture, they cannot be linked to a uniform status iconography distinguishing a particular set of graves and it appears unlikely that they had a formalized symbolic role of this kind (see Dedet 1992, Dietler 1995b, 1997, Gasco 1984, Py 1990). Without repeating what I have argued elsewhere (1995b) in greater detail, I will summarize by stating that this pattern would correspond not to an absence of all status differentiation, but certainly to the absence of any marked institutionalized status hierarchy or regional elite class. Rather, it points to a complex polythetic overlapping of roles, statuses, and affiliations aptly encapsulated in Crumley's (1987) concept of «heterarchy». In political terms this may be seen to correspond to Southall's (1968) «distributive legitimacy»: that is, a non-convergent plurality of points from which legitimate political action may be initiated and contested. On a broad regional level this pattern also points to the related characteristic phenomenon of «multipolities»: the existence of multiple political communities (Southall 1968) with probably quite varied forms of political organization.

The reason that burials of the 4th century BC have been difficult to identify at Lattes, and elsewhere in the region, is that the general pattern which developed throughout the region during the Late Iron Age continued: that is, there was still no investment in conspicuous durable funerary monuments to mark the landscape as memorials. Given the similar absence of obvious markers of status difference in the built environment of the town, in terms of the size or elaborateness of houses (see Py 1996, Py, «La cité de *Lattara*...»), one would have a difficult time advancing an argument for the development of institutionalized status hierarchies or centralized political authority significantly different from what existed in the

6th century BC. Of course, it is not impossible that these things existed; but if one wants to offer such an interpretation it needs to be argued carefully with some plausible positive evidence. However, as will be discussed later, the pattern of consumption of Mediterranean imports also tends to argue strongly against the idea of such developments at Lattes during the 4th century. It is perhaps more reasonable to think in terms of less centralized, smaller-scale forms of political organization based upon the manipulation of informal power and prestige by individuals and groups with differing forms of social and symbolic capital.

Hence, the existence of a town like Lattes does not necessarily imply centralized political authority or social stratification. Moreover, despite common assumptions to the contrary, nor is the development of such sociopolitical features implied by the obviously important role of Lattes in the diffusion of Massaliote trade goods and the mobilization of return goods sought by Massaliote traders. The African ethnographic and historical literature, for example, offers many examples of egalitarian societies which both operated extensive trade networks feeding European coastal trade centers and effectively resisted European incursions, such as the Kamba of Kenya and the Igbo of Nigeria.

### Consumption

Let us return now to the questions posed earlier about why the Lattois should have developed a desire for certain imported goods and how important the consumption of those goods was in their social lives. These issues are worth considering closely because, among other reasons, I believe they can throw some useful light upon some of the social and political questions raised above.

In considering the nature of consumption of Mediterranean goods, a few features stand out as important. In the first place, as noted earlier, the kinds of goods consumed were essentially limited to wine and ceramics. If we ignore, for the moment, quantitative fluctuations and

variations in the source of the wine and the range of forms of ceramics, this pattern of selective consumption was consistent throughout the entire century, as indeed it had been in the region for the previous two centuries. What is more, these goods were apparently consumed in fairly abundant quantities in all households at the site (see Py, «Le faciès de la céramique lattoise...»). This means that there were clearly no sumptuary restrictions on their circulation and consumption, and no glaringly imbalanced disparities in such consumption. In other words, there are no signs of the kind of enclaving of access and consumption that one might expect to see with, for example, the existence of institutionalized social hierarchies or political centralization. But in order to more fully understand demand and its relationship to these issues, we need to pursue the question of the specific nature of the consumption of these goods.

Such a consideration makes it immediately apparent that for at least two centuries the imports consumed at the site were entirely defined by their function in contexts of commensality: eating and, especially, drinking. This is the single (and remarkably consistent) domain of Lattois social life in which Mediterranean imports were incorporated and in which we must seek to understand the desire for those goods. [5] I do not intend to imply by this observation that these goods had precisely the same meaning for the Lattois in the 4th century BC as they did in the 6th century. That would be an absurdly static vision. For one thing, these goods were certainly no longer an exotic novelty. As Py (1992) has noted, by the 4th century, wine was a thoroughly habitual form of alcohol at Lattes and may even have approached the status of a cultural necessity. Moreover, the channels of access were much more established and predictable. Furthermore, the instability and escalating social competition that I suggested would have followed the early period of importation of wine (Dietler 1990, 1996), would have long since stabilized. But what this pattern of imports does mean is that understanding the

importance of these goods for the Lattois still requires us to focus on understanding the crucial role of commensality and feasting in the operation of society.

Before tackling this issue, let us first dispose of an important related question. Was the quantity of wine sufficient to have replaced other indigenous forms of alcohol at Lattes during the 4th century BC? I believe there is good reason to conclude that it was not. It must be pointed out that the amount of alcohol consumed in most traditional societies and the quantities of crops devoted to the production of these forms of drink are much more impressive than most archaeologists realize. Where such things have been measured, estimates of a minimum of 15 to 20 percent of the total yearly grain or root crop devoted to the production of alcohol are common (e.g. Goldman, 1966: 86, Haggblade 1992, Kennedy 1978: 85, Richards 1939: 80). Similarly, Netting (1964) estimated that the Kofyar of Nigeria consume about 40 gallons (151 liters) of millet beer per person each year, while annual consumption estimates for the city of Ouagadougou in Upper Volta ran to 236 liters of traditional beer per person, with half the annual grain consumption for a family being in the form of beer (Pallier 1972, Saul 1981). Likewise, de Garine (1996) noted that among the Koma of Cameroon sorghum beer provides about 1/3 of the total calories consumed during the year (hosting an age grade ceremony requires about 490 liters of beer made from about 100 kg of cereal, a cattle dance requires 525 liters of beer, and a woman's funeral requires about 260 liters of beer). In Manga (a Mossi town of about 7,000 inhabitants in Upper Volta), memorial ceremonies called *kuure* are the occasions for the most lavish beer feasts. In one week, five *kuure* were held in one ward, consuming 1,900 kg of red sorghum (with seven cart-loads of wood — 1,400 kg — required for brewing and cooking for one of these feasts alone); and, during a single dry season, within the town as a whole, about 10 tons of sorghum were converted into beer for these memorial feasts alone, with a total annual festive consumption estimated at

14 tons of grain brewed for beer (Saul 1981). If these figures can be taken as even crudely representative (and it will be remembered that «Celts» in general had a stereotypic reputation as heavy drinkers in Greek and Roman texts), then the average wine consumption figure estimated by Py («La cité de Lattara...») of 33 liters per adult per year would equal only about 20 percent of the average household needs among the Kofyar and only 14 percent of the average consumption at Ouagadougou. Moreover, the 4 amphoras of wine an average Lattois household would acquire in a year would not even provide a third of the drink needed to host a Koma woman's funeral and only 16 percent of the requirements for a Koma cattle dance.

Hence, although the overall quantities of wine consumed at Lattes had grown to impressive proportions during the 4th century BC, these ethnographic data suggest that it is highly unlikely that wine was more than a supplement to other forms of alcohol, such as beer and mead. [6] This does not mean that it was not a symbolically very important element of Lattois commensality, or that it had not become a social «necessity». But it is highly unlikely that the Massaliotes had a monopoly on Lattois alcohol, and any dependence on Massaliote wine would not have been attributable to its having become the sole source of alcohol. Rather, it would have depended upon the culturally-defined significance attributed to its being a *particular kind* of alcohol.

Several features of wine could have made it desirable for the Lattois. First is the fact that wine would have had a much better «shelf-life» than grain beer and mead (without modern bottling and preservation techniques, the latter degrade within a few days of fermentation). This means that wine could be stockpiled in consumable form for use at feasts in a way that other forms of alcohol could not (only partially processed ingredients could be stored for grain beer). It also means that wine could be exchanged more easily than other forms of alcohol, giving it a potential value outside of consumption contexts as a form of gift or

even as a unit of exchange value. Wine may also have had a slightly higher alcohol content than indigenous drinks, increasing its psychoactive effects and hence, potentially, its «magical» power and value in ritual contexts. Finally, wine could be acquired by means other than agricultural production and culinary labor; that is, through exchange transactions with people outside the local community. This feature could be particularly important for people in an expanding urban context where access to agricultural land may have been an increasing problem but where feasting was an important arena for creating and sustaining social relationships, acquiring prestige and influence, and mobilizing labor. And finally, the exotic origin of wine still may have been of symbolic significance, despite the fact that it was a thoroughly «Lattoisized» beverage by the 4th century BC. Wine was still a substance produced in a distant place through techniques that required alien knowledge — hence, by its nature, it was a commodity which demonstrated the power to deal with and extract benefits from an external world (e.g., see Helms 1988).

It is important to remember that in the ethnographic examples I cited above, despite the impressive quantities of resources devoted to the production of alcohol, such drink is not a part of daily consumption in the household. It is something reserved for the festive events that are, in fact, crucial for social reproduction. Indeed, the presence of alcohol is often one of the prominent signs that mark feasts off from quotidian meals. As Karp noted for the Iteso of East Africa, «Beer drinking is a social mechanism for indicating that situations are special, and Iteso conceptions of festivity are defined in terms of beer drinking» (Karp 1980 : 90). Moreover, it is usually only chiefs who are able to offer drink on anything like a daily basis. By feasts I do not mean only very large ceremonial gatherings, but rather public rituals of commensality at any scale. These can be as small as a man hosting a few friends at an informal evening beer drink to feasts at which an entire village is entertained.

Without reiterating in detail what I have published already on this theme (e.g. see Dietler 1990, 1996, 1999) it is crucial to emphasize how ubiquitous and important such events are in the social, political, and economic life of traditional societies. These are events in which social relationships are formed and maintained, events which both create and define a sense of community and establish relationships between individuals. They are also arenas in which individuals define their social position by building prestige and a reputation for generosity. In some contexts this can involve overt competition through commensal hospitality, but more often it involves a more subtle process of simply keeping up responsibilities and demonstrating the expected spirit of generosity. Feasts also frequently serve as the nodal contexts that articulate regional exchange systems: commensal hospitality establishes relationships between exchange partners, affines, or political leaders and provides the social ambiance for the exchange of valuables, bridewealth, and other goods which circulate through a region. Feasts may also provide the main context for the arbitration of disputes, the passing of legal judgments, and the public acting out of sanctions (ridicule, mimicry, ostracism, etc.) that maintain social control within a community. In the important religious sphere, feasts also serve to provide links to the gods or ancestors that can also be used to define the structure of relations between social groups or categories within a region or community. They also provide a crucial mechanism for the process of labor mobilization that underlies the political economy.

One can reasonably assume that feasts were important at Lattes in most of these ways. Indeed, these functions would have become increasingly important and frequent in the growing urban context of Lattes, as social tensions and relations were worked out. And one can also assume that wine was an important component of those feasts. It is also clear that imported ceramics played a role in this domain. During the initial phases of trade, during the 6th century BC, I have sugges-

ted that such exotic ceramics probably acquired the symbolic «framing» function of marking off feasts from quotidian meals (as with sets of fine porcelain tableware in American homes). By the 4th century BC Greek cups and pitchers were probably considered essential forms for such events. Whether by this time these imported ceramics might have become banalized to the point of also being incorporated into daily domestic eating practices, or still retained an indexical value of denoting special events, is uncertain. However, the persistence of small bowls (not simply cooking vessels) in the inventory of hand-modelled CNT-LOR ceramics at the site (see Py, «Le faciès de la céramique lattoise...») suggests that there had not occurred a complete replacement of indigenous tableware. The fact that, as Py notes, at Olbia Attic black gloss ceramics were more eating forms, while those at Lattes were more for drinking, suggests that there was still an emphasis on a connection to feasting for at least a major portion of the imports. The occasional presence of craters among the small number of new forms added to the cups and pitchers that constituted the main repertoire of ceramic forms imported in previous centuries would also tend to support this hypothesis.

Let me illustrate the ways in which I imagine these imported goods played a role in Lattois social life by offering a few examples. One of the facts that is very clear from comparative ethnographic data is that when centralized political authority exists (e.g. in the form of chiefs or kings), a nearly ubiquitous institutionalized responsibility of the leader is generous public hospitality — the chief is expected to regularly host lavish feasts for the community and a failure to do so will result in complaints and a loss of prestige. Moreover, the hosting by another individual of feasts comparable in scale to the chief will be seen as a clear political challenge to his authority. The *Metá* of Cameroon provide a good idea of the typical scale of such obligations:

*«The foremost duty of a fon [village chief] in the mind of any Metá person was to feed his people. This was done*

most lavishly when he provided several grand feasts at the time of his installation. Yet the fon also entertained more modestly on a regular basis. Each time that the villagers worked for him he was obligated to feed them when they had finished their task, and he hosted the entire village whenever he held an annual celebration involving dancing. Likewise, if the village went to war,... the fon... had to provide the returning warriors with an appropriate reception. But even if no such activities had taken place within a year, the people sometimes still expected the fon to give them a feast simply because he was their leader.

Besides hosting the entire village on special occasions, the fon frequently entertained individuals and small groups. He was expected to have wine ready for such visitors at any time, as well as for the *mikum si* [senior village notables] when they met on the village rest day. Moreover, if there was a market in his village, he held court in a house just outside of it, providing palm wine for both the local notables and important visitors." (Dillon 1990 : 129)

Similarly, among the Bemba of Zambia, Richards (1939) noted that the chief was responsible for feeding all those who provided tribute work on his corvée projects, courtiers, executive officials, visiting councilors, and others. She estimated that during one nine-month period the main chief provided food and beer for at least one day for 561 men and 324 women who provided labor and, among others, about 40 tribal councillors with their wives and retinue at least twice (1939 : 147). As she noted, the culinary labor for this is provided by the multiple wives of the chief, under the direction of the senior wife who was necessarily a woman with "a good deal of organizing ability, capable of supervising younger wives, arranging for the endless grinding and brewing required in the capital, and the stirring of huge pots of porridge to be served in enormous eating-baskets about eight times the size of an ordinary *icipe*" (1939 : 148). As she further stated, "The whole of this system of distributing food is of course necessary to the chief if he is

to make gardens and conduct tribal business through his councillors. But it is more than this. The giving of food, as in most African tribes, is an absolutely essential attribute of chieftainship, just as it is of authority in the village or household" (1939 : 148). Correspondingly, the failure of a chief to provide food for his subjects considerably weakens his prestige. "The tradition of the generous king survives as a standard against which the modern ruler is constantly measured, and measured to his disadvantage" (Richards 1939 : 264).

I would suggest that one of the implications of this feature is that if Lattes had a centralized form of political organization, we should expect to see evidence of such hospitality on an inordinately large scale in one household at the site. This would include an unusually large quantity of amphoras and probably such things as large amounts of cattle and pig bones, as well as signs of unusual storage capacity for grain and cooking facilities. The fact that this kind of evidence has not yet appeared is another very strong argument against the existence of centralized authority (along with the lack of differentiation in architecture, the absence of monumental burials, etc.). It also means that we should be looking continually for such evidence as excavations continue and that, for example, we should be very attentive to the relative quantities of amphoras, dolia, tableware, and faunal remains from different domestic units of the site, as well as the size and concentration of ovens in these contexts.

In the absence of such formal political roles, feasting is very often an essential component of the process by which individuals acquire and maintain the prestige necessary to exert influence within the community. It does not create the power to command, but it does imbue individuals with the moral authority that is a necessary condition to exert persuasive influence. Of course, all households will be periodically hosting some kinds of feasts, as these are a normal social obligation for marriages, funerals, festivals, etc. But men of influence will have additional responsibilities for generous hospitality.

For example, among the Luo of Kenya during the precolonial era, one of the main functions of such informal leaders was the arbitration of disputes within the smallest local territorial unit, the *gweng*. The possibility to become an influential leader required the building of prestige and moral authority, and these qualities were acquired from several possible sources of power, including especially : (1) being a senior member of a powerful lineage, (2) personal ability in warfare, and (3) the capacity to marshal a significant amount of support in the face of conflict. Feasts were essential in this last aspect, and success in this domain required wealth in terms of cattle and wives (the Luo are polygynous). The cattle were used for prized meat at feasts, but also for the payment of bridewealth that was necessary to acquire wives. A large number of wives greatly increased the capacity of the homestead for agricultural and culinary labor, so that wealthy men were able create and use food surpluses to host feasts for the lineage leaders who assembled to discuss political and judicial matters. As Whisson (1961 : 7) noted, this wealth was used to entertain "the leaders of the clans and subclans forming the nucleus of a council or court and meeting in the home of the richest or most respected man. This man became *ruoth*, the leader."

In societies where some institutionalized political roles or formal status distinctions exist, but without fixed hereditary rules for determining who may fill them, hosting feasts is often the means by which individuals assume and hold these roles and statuses. For example, among the Koma of Cameroon, there is a formalized age grade system that leads to the possibilities for individuals to become high-ranking initiates and respected makers of policy within the village as they progressively gain access to more secret religious knowledge with each step. Moving up through this system requires the sponsorship of special feasts known as "cattle dances" that are held by a man to honor his wife and are fueled with plenty of millet and sorghum beer and beef. These can be held by a man

only up to six or seven times in a lifetime, and the ability to hold such a feast is decided by fellow villagers who judge whether an individual has acquired the necessary symbolic and economic capital for the rank to which he aspires. There are, of course, many other feasting contexts for acquiring personal prestige that are not tied directly to the age grade structure. These include beer parties hosted for gatherings on market days, for work feasts, and for various ritual activities (de Garine 1996).

Finally, it is also clear that, even under «the domestic mode of production», households (or consumption units) in agrarian societies are not self-sufficient in terms of labor (Donham 1994), and this would undoubtedly have been true of Lattois domestic units as well. All households will have periodic needs for collective work groups larger than the household for such things as agricultural work (weeding, fence construction, harvesting, transport of crops from field to home, etc.) and house construction and repair (expeditions to gather stone, making mud bricks, raising the structure, periodic resurfacing of walls and repair of the roof, etc.). Moreover, community projects such as rampart construction and repair, and periodic work on the roads will also require the mobilization of larger work groups. [7] In this context, it must be remembered that Lattes of the 4th century BC operated with a non-monetary economy. As in similar pre-capitalist ethnographic contexts, labor would not have been a marketable commodity. Aside from slavery, the only way to mobilize such work projects would have been the nearly universal practice of work feasts, in which commensal hospitality induces people to join together to work on a specific project for a day (Dietler and Herbich 1999). There is a range of such practices, in which the obligation to reciprocate labor at the work feasts of others and the scale of lavishness in the food and drink required vary inversely and have an effect upon the size of the work group that can be raised. Lattes undoubtedly depended upon a range of such practices (from small reciprocal work groups to

large festive work parties) for the circulation of labor and the operation of its economy.

It is in these kinds of roles that I believe we can imagine feasting and the circulation of wine at Lattes and understand the demand for Massaliote goods in the town. In other words, such things as the settling of disputes, the building of personal prestige, the organization of labor for agriculture, house construction and road repair, the maintenance of a sense of community, marriage practices and the maintenance of affinal relations, and the establishment and maintenance of exchange networks would have depended to a certain extent upon feasting. Massaliote wine would have been, by the 4th century BC, an expected part of such events (although still constituting only a part of the alcohol served), as would imported drinking vessels (and, to some extent, food service vessels). Whether wine would have been a part of all such events, or reserved for certain kinds of feasts (for which it might have constituted the sole or predominant form of alcohol) is difficult to determine. What is clear is that all households were using wine and imported ceramics in some kinds of feasts. For reasons explained earlier, the quantities of wine consumed at Lattes (as estimated by Py, «La cité de *Lattara*...» this volume), when measured against the quantities of alcohol consumed in ethnographic cases, argue against the idea that wine had become a normal part of daily meals for the Lattois. It is far more likely that wine remained something associated with feasts, and may even have become an indexical sign of the festive nature of such events. In other words, «it's not a proper feast if there is no wine» (or at least not a proper feast of a certain kind).

Although I have said a good deal about feasting at Lattes, it will not have escaped notice that I have yet to point to anything in the archaeological record that can be identified specifically as a feast. In other words, I have been talking about a process without identifying specific events. Does this limit the credibility of the interpretation? Not necessarily. In the first place, we make similar kinds of in-

ferences about processes like trade (or farming, or fishing, etc.) without actually being able to point to any specific trading event or place where trade took place. And, in the case of feasting, this kind of inference seems warranted because: (1) the evidence from comparative ethnography on a world-wide scale for the importance of feasting for the operation of the political economy and for social reproduction is so consistent and compelling that it is hard to imagine that feasts did not play an important role in Lattois life, (2) Greek and Roman texts certainly indicate an important role for feasts and alcohol among Celtic-speaking peoples in general, and (3) the articulation of exchanges between the Lattois and Etruscan and Greek merchants was so single-mindedly concentrated in the domain of commensality for so long that no other explanation seems comparably plausible. Finally, I believe that the data on the deposit of cattle bones in association with two iron roasting spits in the street 123 of Zone 1 reported by Armelle Gardeisen («*Découpe et consommation de viande...*» this volume) do, in fact, represent perhaps the first very good evidence of a specific feast event, as she indicated.

Her argument is based, in addition to the association with the iron spits, upon a careful analysis of the bones, which indicates that parts of the cattle were consumed on the spot while some cuts were removed. In further support of her suggestion, let me explain an additional chain of logic that supplements this interpretation of the remains of a feast. One must first appreciate the important fact that Lattes was not a monetary economy. It had no general purpose money that served as a uniform standard of value against which all goods and services could be measured — no universal scale of «prices». Societies of this type usually operate with some version of what is called a «multi-centric» economy: that is one in which there are different «spheres of exchange» or «regimes of value» in which there are moral barriers to «conversions» between spheres (Bohannon 1955, Piot 1991). This means that certain kinds of objects can be exchanged for each other,

but not for certain other objects because the values are not thought to be comparable. In other words, there are moral sanctions preventing conversion between spheres of exchange, except perhaps in times of extreme duress. Hence, for example, in the precolonial era among the Luo of Kenya, cattle were part of a prestige sphere of exchange (they were used as bridewealth and could be exchanged for iron hoes) whereas things such as grain and ceramics were part of a lesser sphere of value. [8] Nobody in his or her right mind would exchange a cow for even an enormous quantity of grain or pots (except in times of famine), because cattle were «wealth» and the other things were not. This meant that, the only time that cattle were butchered and turned into meat was for a feast. A cow represented too much meat for a family to eat in the time the meat would remain edible ; and, in any case, it was too valuable to «waste» in this way without some social benefit. Moreover, it could not be butchered and sold in parts because there was nothing the parts could be exchanged for that would equal the value of the cow. In fact, it was not until the introduction of European money and the gradual adoption of the mentality of universal convertibility that the idea of butchery for exchange became thinkable. Only then did one see the development of specialized butchers at markets who would buy a cow for money and sell parts of it for money. Even to this day, however, beef is still something consumed primarily at feasts — although one can now obtain smaller portions without slaughtering a whole cow oneself because butchers can sell parts for money and use that money to buy another cow.

My point in this example is to support Gardeisen's interpretation by suggesting a further reason that the remains of the two cattle she reported very probably represent animals slaughtered for a feast, with much of the meat consumed at the event, and some cuts presented as gifts. There is

not a large enough accumulation of bones to represent a specialized butchery site, and I doubt that such a thing existed at Lattes during the 4th century BC. Unless there is a medium of general purpose money that allows convertibility of all things into commodities with values reckoned on a common scale, then the specialized butcher is a cultural non sequitur : someone who takes a valuable object and transforms it into pieces in order to exchange for objects that cannot ever be valuable enough to exchange for the original object. Of course, it is possible that cattle at Lattes did not have the same exalted value they commonly do in Africa, or that they obviously did among the Celtic-speaking peoples of ancient Ireland (see the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*) ; but they must still have been quite valuable animals requiring considerable effort devoted to husbandry in the Lattois environment. I would even venture to hypothesize that, like wine, beef was an indexical sign of feasting at Lattes, at least until the advent of a more monetized economy in the 1st century BC. Finally, an intriguing additional suggestion on this issue was raised by Michel Py (personal communication), who noted that the fact that the feast remains are directly covered (without signs of trampling) by the new reconstruction of ilot 1B might suggest that they belong to a work feast used to mobilize labor for this construction project.

### A Highly Speculative Conclusion

Obviously, I have posed far more questions here than I have been able to answer in even a tentative fashion ; but I have tried to pose them in ways that used anthropological data to suggest why they were important and how they might eventually be answered. Whether or not this is a useful exercise can only be determined in the future, if ways are found to provide more plausible responses to some of those questions. Many will remain beyond our reach, but I believe it

is nevertheless important to be aware of the potential influence of factors that we can only surmise on the basis of analogical inferences.

Having voiced these caveats, if I had to throw caution to the wind and try to bring some concluding order to these disparate observations by venturing a *highly* speculative sketch of what Lattois society and social life were like during the 4th century BC, I would imagine the town as essentially still a very large village, or perhaps rather a cluster of villages. Its population would be composed primarily of farmers and fishermen, with very few people who did not still depend to a major extent on their own agrarian work for their subsistence. It would have some wealthy and influential households, and probably networks of patron-client relationships, but no institutionalized social stratification or centralized political authority. Rather, political action would be orchestrated and legal order negotiated by groups of influential individuals with constituent bases in the different clans or lineages that occupied the different blocks and neighbourhoods of the town. Some of these influential men would be skilled warriors, some might have magical or religious powers, all would be skilled orators and generous dispensers of hospitality and gifts. There would undoubtedly be a continual series of shifting factional struggles over a variety of issues, and no real enduring dominance (remaining an influential person in the town would require continual symbolic work to maintain prestige and manipulate personal relationships). The kin-based groups that occupied Lattes would intermarry, and they would also have a variety of intersecting kinship and affinal links to similar groups in other villages in Eastern Languedoc. If the Lattois were polygynous (and this is a very uncertain «if»), then the men of influence would generally have more wives than others, and more affinal links both within Lattes and to different villages of the region. For all households,

usufruct rights to agricultural land and pasture would be determined by membership in these corporate groups, with, perhaps, more senior Lattois lineages having claim to closer or better land than more recent arrivals.

Social life would be animated by frequent feasts held in homes and the streets in front of homes. Wine and beer would flow freely at these events, and they would be served and consumed in imported drinking vessels — at least that consumed by more senior men (juniors might perhaps be served in more common vessels and might be served more beer than wine). At least at the bigger feasts, beef and other meats would also be a much appreciated break from the routine of daily rounds of starch and vegetable dishes. Indeed, if cattle were normally kept outside the walls of the town, then the herding of a couple of these beasts through the streets to a house and their slaughter would be a keenly remarked advertisement of an impending feast. The size and lavishness of these events would vary according to the occasion (marriage, funeral, initiation, harvest festival, reception of visitors from another village, reception of Massaliote traders, gathering to air disputes, informal gathering of a few senior men to gossip and discuss local affairs, currying favor with influential patrons, etc.) and the means of the household dispensing commensal hospitality; but all households would host some kinds of these events from time to time. Feasts would also be organized to gather laborers for building and repairing houses, and for the improvement of streets. Everyone in the town would

know who had a reputation for providing really copious feasts with lots of wine, and, as the word spread of the preparations, young men and women from different neighbourhoods would gladly congregate to join such work feasts. Smaller amounts of food and drink (perhaps not wine) would also be carried to the fields for small cooperative weeding and field clearing groups. Some wealthy individuals might also use more lavish feasts to work certain fields especially for crops sought by Massaliote merchants or to mount gathering expeditions to obtain goods which could be used in trade.

There would probably be some designated marketplace, perhaps a large clear area under some trees outside the main gate of the town, where people would congregate periodically to exchange goods (ceramic pots, grain, baskets, rope, fish, etc.). Some of these goods would also be obtained directly from the homes of the producers, especially by kin. This market area is where Massaliote merchants would barter their lots of wine and ceramics for local products that they could trade at Marseille or at other sites along the coast. The market would also be a major social event, a place for people to go in their best clothes and meet and gossip, even if they had nothing to exchange. Along with dances at feasts, it would be a prime place for young people to flirt and evaluate potential future mates. The market would be known in the area as one of the few places where wine could be obtained fairly regularly and as a place where, consequently, there was usually a good crowd of people with a variety of local products to exchange.

Some individuals in the town might also have special friendship arrangements with Massaliote merchants and would store wine and pots that were not sold on market day (there might even be a few resident Massaliote traders who would serve this function).

Life would not be easy. Many people would have to go quite far to work in their fields. And young unmarried men might have to be stationed permanently outside the town to look after the livestock. Moreover, people would have malarial fevers often, and parents would see many of their children die before reaching adulthood. Nevertheless, the town would be a bustling place that would provide its residents with the sense that they were at the center of their world.

How confident am I of this speculative scenario of social life at Lattes? Let us say that it is at least plausible, and some of the details (e.g. the feasting, the disease) I would even qualify as highly probable. However, the relative plausibility of this interpretation as a whole in comparison to other possible readings is still uncertain. It will clearly depend upon further excavation to evaluate the likelihood of many points, and I would certainly not want this reconstruction to be taken for more than it is — that is, a kind of tentative working hypothesis. If this article serves to stimulate the formulation of other, yet more plausible, models and the search for new kinds of data and ways of evaluating them that will improve our understanding of social life, then this somewhat unorthodox provocative exercise will have served its purpose. Sometimes it is useful to dare to be wrong.

## NOTES

(1) Py (1996) has suggested that the house plan that he has defined as Type 3B might be a form borrowed from the Etruscan or Greek *maison à pastas*. While this is possible, it is by no means a necessary conclusion. Both are, in fact, fairly elementary configurations of space. Moreover, in looking at the cultural logic of the spatial patterning of indigenous houses, one can easily see the 3B patterns as resulting from a process of structured improvisation in solving the problem of creating a third room divi-

sion while adhering to a coherent approach to domestic space represented by several other common patterns (1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A). In all these cases, the common feature is a single point of entry to the structure as a whole, with access to all domestic space and all other rooms flowing directly through that entry space. In other words, single room structures at Lattes almost always have only one entry door. When a second room is added to the plan, it typically becomes secluded space which can only

be reached through the entry room. When a third room is added, one sees several solutions. The most common is that the third room also becomes a secluded room which also leads directly off the entry room. This implies a binary division of space, with an entry area and one or more subsidiary areas that lead directly off from it. In terms of a grammar of space, one might designate this as a *Y-form* pattern. An alternative solution is what may be called an *I-form* pattern (in which successive rooms beca-

me increasingly secluded, with access to the deepest room requiring passage through all of the others : this implies a tripartite, or multiple, hierarchy of space). A different logic from either of the others is a «U-form» pattern (in which there are two points of access to the exterior and all rooms fall along the path of the U and have two doors).

Given a conceptual model of a house of 2B or 2C type, if one wanted to create a third room, either a Y-form or an I-form would be alternative solutions consistent with the logic of spatial penetration of the domestic space, although one would end up with either a binary or tripartite spatial division. The U-form (or some similar bi-directional penetration model) would be a significant departure. It does not appear to be represented in the 4th century BC repertoire (except possibly UNF 408, which is also unusual because of its metalworking furnace), and seems to be a later innovation (e.g. UNF 117, 301). In fact, two of the earliest examples of the 3B type dating to the 4th century BC (UNF 101 and 409) actually show an I-form pattern. Similarly, if one counts the verandah of the 3A form as an entry room, then UNF 406 and 407 are also I-form arrangements. On the other hand, UNF 702, 2502, and 3201 would be Y-form structures, and 2502 is a combination of the two. Hence, the elaboration of triple-room structures at Lattes can be more plausibly attributed to the working out of structured improvisations guided by a basic indigenous habitus generating dispositions toward the organization of space (which produced forms showing certain similarities to Greek and Etruscan solutions to these same problems) than to an active imitation of Greek or Etruscan houses.

(2) The location of central hearths in the entry room or a back room of the house is a feature that one might have expected to be a significant cultural pattern. Because of the usual cultural importance of hospitality, the space where visitors are received is usually a well-defined part of the spatial conception of the house. Whether in this case, a central hearth was associated with guest space or with kitchen space set apart from guest space is uncertain ; but one might expect some consistent patterning. In

fact, the 4th century BC houses seem to show some variability in this pattern. In UNF 102, 104, 107, 702, 703, 2201, 2401, 2402, and 2502, central hearths are found in the back room. In UNF 105, 108, 109, 406, 407, 409, and 701, they are in the front room (see Py 1996). If patterning were consistent within neighbourhoods, this might be a possible clue to some of the residential affiliation issues discussed above. However, it appears that in the sequence of 105, 107, 108, the placement shifts back and forth in the same location. Hence, there are obviously other factors involved.

(3) Virilocal means that the wife moves to join the husband's household ; uxoriocal means that the husband joins the wife's household. These patterns may be even more specifically «patrilocal» (in which the wife goes to live in the residential compound of the husband's father) or «matrilocal» (in which the husband goes to live in the wife's mother's residence). There is a strong correlation between patrilineal kinship systems and patri-virilocal residence, and between matrilineal kinship systems and matri-uxoriocal residence. There are, of course, a number of other possible patterns as well.

(4) A *nuclear* (or «conjugal» or «elementary») family includes only one set of parents and children (with the circumstantial addition of some other family members). A *stem* family consists of a nuclear family plus the natal family of one spouse. An *extended* family generally includes members of three or more generations, sometimes with collateral branches. Py (1996 : 251) has made the reasonable suggestion that the limited size of the domestic units probably indicates nuclear families resident in individual houses at Lattes. However, there are many different forms that nuclear families can take. Moreover, it is important to know how the households are related, as the family may actually extend over several houses (e.g. in the case of a polygynous family or an extended family of whatever composition).

(5) A few types of Greek ceramics from the domain of culinary preparation are also found at Lattes during the 4th century BC. Of these, the only type that is even moderately significant numerically is the Massaliote mortar (Bats 1992, Py, «Le faciès de

la céramique lattoise...»). As Bats (1992) has noted, this is very similar in form to indigenous *jattes*, and may have served as an occasional functional replacement. The small number of *cacabai* and *lopades* found are unlikely to have been more than curiosities (if not, as Bats suggests, the ceramics of temporarily resident Greek merchants). In any case, the *urne* remained, for both the Lattois and other peoples of Eastern Languedoc, the overwhelmingly predominant culinary vessel, and the Greek ceramic repertoire made few inroads in the kitchen (Bats 1992, Py 1990, Py, «Le faciès de la céramique lattoise...»).

(6) This is a question that could be fairly easily resolved with chemical analysis of organic residues in drinking vessels and brewing vessels. Beer has a characteristic chemical signature that has been identified in ceramics as old as 3,500 BC (Michel et al. 1992).

(7) As Denis Lebeau (1996 : 137) has noted, excavations have shown that work on the roads became an increasing concern during the 4th century BC, as the growing population necessitated a more carefully surfaced road network with better drainage. One can imagine that these repair and improvement projects were mounted periodically for individual streets or sections of the larger roads by blocks of residents who cooperated in work feasts, and thereby also drew workers from other parts of the settlement to participate. There is no need to imagine a central administration or public official planning such roadwork, as ethnographic examples of such cooperative projects in acephalous societies are very numerous. However, if such work were directed by a chief, then ethnographic evidence indicates that such *corvée* labor would have functioned in a very similar festive pattern — only with food and drink provided by the chief (the difference between *corvée* labor and other work feasts is generally only the obligation to participate in the former : both require generous supplies of food and drink).

(8) Unreferenced information on the Luo derives from ethnographic research conducted by Ingrid Herbich and me in Kenya from 1980 to 1983.

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*mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie de Lattes*

# LATTARA

## 12

*Recherches sur  
le quatrième siècle  
avant notre ère à Lattes*

sous la  
direction de  
**Michel Py**

avec la participation de

**Andrès Adroher, Sébastien Barbéran, Ramon Buxó  
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